

Report file

SQUAW CREEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

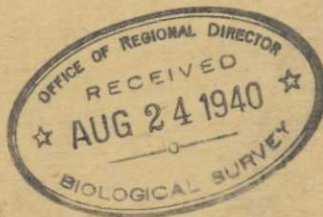
1940

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

FOREST CITY, MISSOURI



R
Squaw Creek
Birds

November 26, 1940.

Mr. Burnis Maurek, Regional Director,
500 National Building,
529 Second Avenue South,
Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Dear Mr. Maurek:

Reference is made to the 1940 Annual Report submitted by
Mr. DePuy for the Squaw Creek Refuge.

In a careful analysis of the list of birds for the refuge in-
cluded in this report it was found that some seventeen species pre-
viously reported as observed on the area were deleted from the list.
They are as follows:

Eastern least bittern	Spotted sandpiper
Osprey	Pectoral sandpiper
Chukar partridge	White-rumped sandpiper
Sandhill crane	Red-backed sandpiper
King rail	Stilt sandpiper
Sora	Semipalmated sandpiper
Semipalmated plover	Western sandpiper
American golden plover	Hudsonian godwit
Common tern	

It is not clear whether these are purposive deletions or merely
omissions. If deleted because of questionable status of the species
previously submitted Mr. DePuy should advise this office so that we
may correct our records accordingly.

The 1940 list of birds also includes the following species of
which we have no previous records:

Red-tailed hawk	Virginia rail
Swainson's hawk	Least tern
Duck hawk	Screech owl
Great horned owl	

The Refuge Manager has not reported on these species during the past year, consequently there are no records on file as to the status of the species, i.e., whether it is a wintering, migrant or nesting species; also it is desirable that Mr. DeFay furnish information relative to the numbers of each species using the refuge.

The preparation of a bird list for a refuge is an important activity and considerable care must be exercised in its compilation to avoid errors. The list on file in the refuge office obviously should be in agreement with the systematic card files of the Division of Wildlife Refuges. The bird list in the Washington files includes all records submitted since the establishment of the refuge, and if the Refuge Manager, upon a reexamination of his files finds he has no records of the first list of species included in this letter we will gladly send him such data as is needed to complete his records.

Mr. DeFay should be instructed to clarify the discrepancies in his lists in order that we may correct our files.

Very truly yours,

W. P. Kubishak
In Charge
Section of Habitat Improvement
Division of Wildlife Refuges

PWC:vw

Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Annual Narrative Report

1940

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United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

Forest City, Missouri

TRANSMITTED BY REGIONAL OFFICE

9-6-40

MAH

W.H.
Sue

I. WILDLIFE

(a) The following is a list of the more common birds seen on this refuge. It is by no means a complete list and additions should be made to it from time to time.

- ✓✓ Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)
- ✓ Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)
- Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*)
- ✓✓ Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra*)
- ✓✓ Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus auritus*)
- ✓✓ White Pelican (*Pelicanus erythrorhynchos*)
- ✓✓ American Merganser (*Mergus americanus*)
- ✓✓ Red Breasted Merganser (*Mergus ser^xator*)
- ✓✓ Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
- ✓✓ Black Duck (*Anas rubipes*)
- ✓✓ Gadwall (*Chaulelasmus streperus*)
- ✓✓ American Widgeon (*Mareca americana*)
- ✓✓ Green-winged Teal (*Nettion carolinense*)
- ✓✓ Blue-winged Teal (*Querquedula discors*)
- ✓✓ Shoveller (*Spatula clypeata*)
- ✓✓ Pintail (*Dafila acuta*)
- ✓✓ Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)
- ✓✓ Redhead (*Marila americana*)
- ✓✓ Canvas-back (*Marila valisineria*)
- ✓✓ Lesser Scaup (*Marila affinis*)
- ✓✓ Ring-necked Duck (*Marila collaris*)

- ✓ ✓ American Golden-eye (*Clangula clangula americana*)
- ✓ ✓ Buffle-head (*Charitonetta albeola*)
- ✓ ✓ Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis*)
- ✓ ✓ Snow Goose (*Chen hyperboreus*)
- ✓ ✓ Blue Goose (*Chen caerulescens*)
- ✓ ✓ White-fronted ^{Goose} (Anser albifrons)
- ✓ ✓ Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)
- ✓ ✓ American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)
- ✓ ✓ Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias herodias*)
- ✓ ✓ American Egret (*Herodias egretta*)
- ✓ ✓ Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerula*)
- ✓ ✓ Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)
- ✓ ✓ Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticoras nycticoras naevius*)
- ✓ ✓ Virginia Rail (*Rallus virginianus*)
- ✓ ✓ American Coot (*Fulica americana*)
- ✓ ✓ Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*)
- ✗ ✓ Least Sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*)
- ✓ ✓ Greater Yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*)
- ✗ ✓ Lesser Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*)
- ✓ ✓ Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*)
- ✓ ✓ Bob-white (*Colinus virginianus*)
- ✓ ✓ Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus torquatus*)
- ✓ ✓ Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura carolinensis*)
- ✗ ✓ Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)
- ✓ ✓ Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*)
- ✓ ✓ Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis*)

registered 1940
Black-bellied plover
Wilson's Snipe

- Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
- ✓ ✓ Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
- Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus*)
- Screech Owl (*Otus asio*)
- Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*)
- ✓ Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)
- Stella ✓ Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*)
- ✓ Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)
- ✓ Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)
- ✓ Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*)
- ✓ Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*)
- ✓ Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)
- Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) X
- ✓ ✓ Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) X
- ✓ Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)
- ✓ Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
- ✓ Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)
- ✓ Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*)
- ✓ Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)
- ✓ American Goldfinch (*Astragalinus tristis*)
- ✓ English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
- ✓ Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*)
- ✓ Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)
- ✓ Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
- ✓ Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*)
- ✓ Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon lunifrons*)
- ✓ Barn Swallow (*Hirundo erythrogastra*)

- ✓ Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennae*)
- ✓ Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*)
- ✓ Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*)
- ✓ Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)
- ✓ Robin (*Merula migratoria*)
- ✓ Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)

(b) The most unusual concentration of birds seen on the refuge during the year occurred on March 13, 1940 when an estimated 250,000✓ ducks fed in the fields on the east side of the area near Headquarters. I believe that the above number is at least 50,000 more ducks than were seen on the refuge at any *one* time during the preceding fiscal year. One thirty-acre corn field resembled an over-crowded poultry yard. There must have been an average of ten birds on every square rod of the field.

We were experiencing a blizzard on the day of this concentration and many of the ducks may have been driven back from farther north. A large majority of these birds, perhaps 200,000 were pintails✓. The remainder were mostly mallards. The first of the blue✓ and snow✓ geese were just arriving from the south and alighted in the fields with the ducks.

Later in March, there were possibly 50,000 blue✓ and snow✓ geese on or near the refuge at one time. This was approximately 10,000 more than we were estimated to have at any one time last year.

Most other kinds of water birds such as shore birds, coots, pelicans, gulls, terns, cormorants, grebes and various kinds of herons were less numerous this year than last. This was most likely due to the fact that we had less water this year than last. No ducks are believed to have nested here this year.

Cottontail rabbits are present in larger numbers than usual this year.

- (c) Our nesting islands are used not at all by geese and very little by ducks and other water birds. The bird shelters are used principally as feeding stations for upland game since we keep grain in them during the winter.

We left approximately 1,600 bushels of corn in the fields last fall. Very little of it remained at corn-planting time this spring. The ducks and geese got the larger part of it. We moved most of our share of the higera out of the field where it grew and set the shocks up at widely scattered points over the refuge. The seed was cleaned out of these shocks by pheasants and many kinds of small birds. A few shocks were left in the field and the ducks ate the seed out of them on March 13 and 14.

Our ponds are used by large numbers of ducks, geese, coots, shore birds and pelicans during the migration periods. They

are used by herons and some shore birds throughout the summer.

During the winter of 1939-40, we put up 25 nail kegs remodeled for wood ducks. None of them were used by wood ducks. A family of red squirrels was born in one of them. One of the kegs that we put up last year was occupied by a swarm of honey bees.

II. WATER CONDITIONS

- (a) The annual rainfall in this region has been below average for several years. The year covered by this report was also one of little precipitation. Early in 1939, we lowered the water levels in our pools in order to work on the levees. This fact coupled with the dry weather, has caused the water levels in our lakes to remain very low throughout the year. We have had 200 or 300 acres of water surface when we should have had ten times that amount. In each of the three pools, the water levels are from one and one-half to five feet below normal. The borrow pits are the only places where the water is more than one foot deep.

III. DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- (a) The corn crib, granary and poultry house were remodeled. Water-control structures were built in each of the two cross levees. A total of 26,975 lineal feet of levee was riprapped with a strip of rock from six to thirteen feet wide to prevent wave erosion. The dragline was used principally to keep the channels of Davis Creek and Squaw Creek open. Many other

minor improvements were made on the refuge. This work was all done by W.P.A. and accounts of it will be found in the W.P.A. monthly reports.

- (b) The following trees and shrubs were planted in the spring of 1940. ✓

Hackberry (<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>)	1,000
Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus</i> sp.)	1,635
Osage Orange (<i>Maclura pomifera</i>)	8,000
White Mulberry (<i>Morus alba</i>)	1,000
Wild Plum (<i>Prunus americana</i>)	8,000
Fox Grapes (<i>Vitis vulpina</i>)	1,000
Wild Grapes (<i>Vitis</i> sp.)	1,000
Red Cedar (<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>)	1,500
Red Bud (<i>Cercis</i> sp.)	260

The following cuttings were planted along the levees in April, 1940.

Button bush (<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>)	2,000
Sandbar Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.)	12,700

Ninty acres ✓ of wheat were sown by cooperative lessees in the fall of 1939. This spring, cooperative lessees planted 328 acres of corn ✓ and 85 acres of grain sorghums ✓. Fifty ✓ pounds of wild celery (*Vallisneria spiralis*) seed pods were planted in October 1939. Twenty-eight ✓ pounds of American pondweed (*Potamogeton americanus*) seed were planted on April 5, 1940 and 300

pounds of sago pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*) seed were planted, part on April 5 and part on April 22, 1940. The wild celery and pondweed seeds were planted in the borrow pits along the levees. Round-stemmed bulrushes were dug and planted along one and one-half miles of levee.

(c) During the year covered by this report, we banded the following birds.

✓ Mallards	600
✓ Black Ducks	1
✓ Pintails	7
✓ Blue-winged Teals	11
✓ Green-winged Teals	5
✓ American Widgeons	20
✓ Wood Ducks	7
✓ Redheads	7
✓ Canvasbacks	1
✓ American Coots	15
✓ American Bitterns	1
✓ American Crows	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	676

(d) On the night of November 30, 1939, someone entered the refuge on the west side and stole six Government-owned steel traps that the laborer-patrolman had set as part of our project to control muskrats. An investigation was made on the following day. Human tracks were seen at various places. The

identity of the thief or thieves was not learned.

IV. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- (a) During the six warmer months of the year, an average of one party per week climbs to the lookout station back of Headquarters to look over the refuge and surrounding country. These parties average about three persons. Fishing is the only other recreational use made of the refuge. The best fishing comes before July 1. From July 1, 1939 to the time that the refuge was closed to fishing on September 15, 1939, an estimated average of five persons per day fished on the area. In 1940, the refuge was not opened to fisherman until after June 30, which is the closing date for this report.
- (b) Cooperative farming is the only economic use made of the refuge. It was discussed under III (b).
- (c) One of the very best ways to promote a good feeling toward the refuge by the local public is to permit fishing on the area. The laborer-patrolman and the refuge manager have conducted a number of school and 4-H Club groups on tours over the refuge. The refuge manager has given conservation talks before several high school assemblies and service clubs in this vicinity.